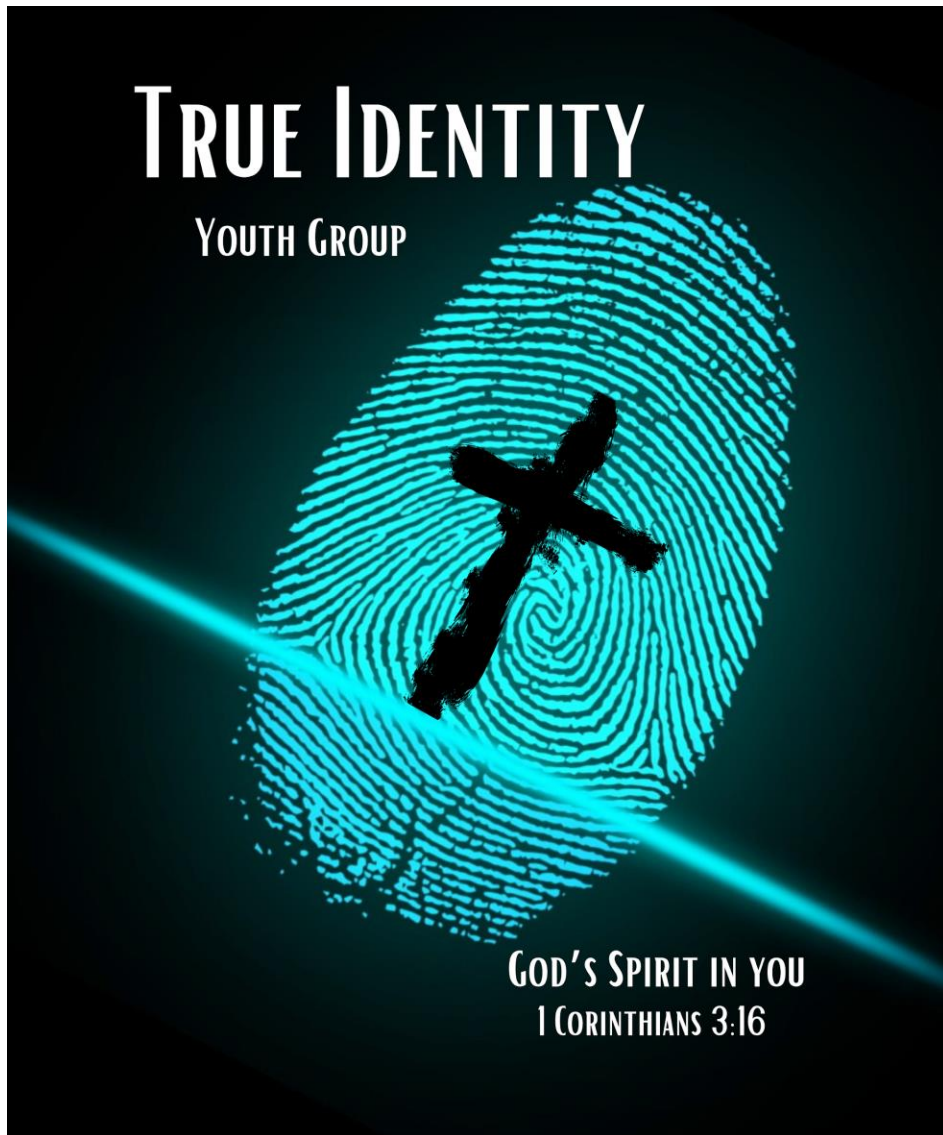


TRUE IDENTITY

YOUTH GROUP



GOD'S SPIRIT IN YOU
1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

NEW LIFE ASSEMBLY YOUTH MINISTRY

TWEEN AGES 11-16

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

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I. Philosophy of the Youth Ministry

Purpose and Objective

The New Life Assembly True Identity Youth Group exists to reach, teach and equip our tweens/teens to become fully developed Christ followers. Our hope is that they develop a faith that exists outside of the church building. A walk in relationship with Jesus Christ at the CENTER that is dynamic, lived out, and shared beyond our church walls.

The purpose for establishing a Youth Protection Policy is to demonstrate our clear commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of our youth. New Life (1) prevent the occurrence and /or appearance of abuse of our youth, (2) protect our adults from false accusations and/or suspicions, (3) protect the reputation and financial emotional well-being of the entire church.

Core Values & Expectations

Parents will take primary responsibility for discipleship of children.(Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

- The primary minister in a young person's life is his/her parents. While it is true that youth ministry is important, its role is not to assume the responsibility God has entrusted to the parents. Therefore, the staff of the youth ministry will seek to partner with parents to support them in accomplishing the task God has given them. We will not usurp the parent's role, but come alongside to support, encourage and love them in this process.

The word of God will be the foundation of what we do.(2 Tim 4:1-2; James 1:22-24; Psalm 119; 2 Tim 3:15-17; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:12)

- The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to transform lives. Without the centrality of scripture, ministry loses its focus and, as a result, opportunities for lasting spiritual impact are diminished or lost. Therefore, from start to finish, Scripture will remain foundational and permeate all that we do.

The gospel of Christ will be the primary message.(John 14:1-6; Acts 4:12)

- Games, events, and craziness of all kinds is great, but only when they work to accomplish the ultimate goal- *saving faith in Jesus Christ*. For this reason, all that we do will be designed with salvation and Christ-likeness in mind. Our goal is not to entertain our young people or have the coolest, most cutting edge ministry in town, but to remain true to the gospel, trusting that God can and will change lives. We will do this by never assuming that our young people already have a sufficient understanding of the gospel and never exhorting the students to obey God's word apart from the gospel.

The church is the body of Christ and the youth ministry will learn and submit to the overall purposes of the church. (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:1-16; Colossians 3:15; Titus 2:6-8; 1 Peter 5:1-5)

- The youth ministry is not a separate church. Youth ministry exists under the umbrella of Christ as the head of the Church, and the elders who shepherd the local church. Accordingly, we will teach our youth what the bible says about their responsibility to the church as a whole and encourage them to be involved in the local church. Our youth are encouraged to serve in a ministry during Sunday service, we want to help them grow in areas that interest them and even in areas they may not realize they could be of service. We have youth currently serving as Junior Ushers, Video Tech, Sound Ministry, Worship, Nursery and in our Tikes room. These assignments are done by speaking with the Youth Director.

We will speak the truth in love while being patient with all believers in the process of spiritual growth. (1 Corinthians 3:5-8; Ephesians 5:17-24; Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 6:4; 2 Tim 4:2)

- There are differences between justification, sanctification and glorification. In justification God declares sinners righteous by crediting them with the perfect righteousness of Christ. This free gift is received by faith alone. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit of God works godliness into the hearts and lives of believers. Glorification comes when we see Jesus face to face and are transformed into His very image. Whereas justification and glorification are instantaneous, sanctification is an ongoing process that will never be fully completed or fully realized in this life. As with all of us, no young person will ever be without sin on this earth. Therefore, we will seek to be patient with all young people in the process of spiritual growth, believing that “He who began a good work in them will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:6—paraphased)

There is no semblance of favouritism within the ministry because all young people matter to God. (Psalm 139:13-16; Luke 15; Luke 19:10; Romans 5:8; 1 Tim 1:15-17; James 2:1-5; 2 Peter 3:9)

- Each young person is fearfully and wonderfully made unique in God’s eyes. Regardless of dress, lifestyle, or personal background, God loves each young person equally. Therefore, we will seek to demonstrate that same love through fairness and impartiality. We will encourage each young person to interact freely and openly with each other, while discouraging “cliques” of any kind. We will remain equally accessible to everyone.

II. Youth Protection Policies

Application

This policy is applicable to all individuals having direct contact with the youth of New Life Assembly, including but not limited to, pastors, staff, teachers, volunteers, chaperones, and drivers.

Definitions

Inappropriate Displays of Affection

- Any form of sexual contact or contact perceived as stimulating.
- Intimate kissing.
- Initiating full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”.
- Massages.
- Lying down or sleeping beside youth.
- Inappropriate tickling or wrestling.
- Touching or hugging from behind.
- Showing affection in isolated/inappropriate areas such as bedrooms, closets, restricted or private rooms.
- Comments that relate to physique or body development.
- Patting on the thigh, knee or leg.
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Piggy back rides.

Appropriate Displays of Affection

- Use of appropriate physical contact in a public setting to show support, encouragement, and healthy affection toward youth who are receptive to this form of emotional expression is acceptable. However adults must exercise good judgement and never force physical contact on any youth. Examples of appropriate affection may include:
 - Holding hands during prayers or when a person is upset.
 - Side-hugs.
 - Holding hands while walking with small children.
 - Hand-shakes.
 - High-fives, hand slaps and fist bumps.
 - Verbal praise.
 - Pats on the shoulder/back.

Appropriate Discipline

Adults will employ only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages, builds self-esteem, self-control and self-direction. Examples of positive discipline include:

- Use of praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behaviour.
- Reminding youth of behaviour using positive statements.
- Using brief separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the youth's age and development.
- If course correction is not able to be achieved with the previously mentioned corrective measures, and the youth is exhibiting rebellion, a meeting with the parents will take place with the Youth Director to discuss the behaviors.
- If course correction is not possible and the youth is unwilling to abide by the acceptable behavior policies the youth may be asked not to participate in youth ministry until a time that youth is able to make the decision to do so.

Harsh, cruel or unusual treatment under the guise of discipline is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Guidelines

General

Adults involved in New Life Assembly youth ministries must assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in all youth ministry relationships.

- **Two Adult Rule:** It is our preference that there be a minimum of two adults when possible when interacting with the youth, if there are times when it is not possible for two adults then there should be two youth to the one adult. There may be times when one – one interaction is necessary, the interaction will occur in an area that is visible to others and with the knowledge of another adult. (Parents or guardians must have guests who may be in attendance.)
- It is preferred that when at a regular youth group meeting there be at least three adult volunteers, at least one being female.

Trips/Outings Off New Life Property

- Any time that the youth attend an event that is not held at the Griswold New Life Assembly Campus building at 898 Voluntown Rd. Griswold, CT. 06351, a permission slip

and medical form are required. The medical form is a release of permission for the youth to be treated by emergency personnel in the event it is required. This form must have the insurance information necessary for the youth to be treated at an emergency facility if we are unable to reach a parent/guardian. It is helpful for there to be a copy of the insurance card

Transport

All youth must ride in vehicles driven by authorized vehicles being operated.

- Have no record of conviction for the past five years for DUI, driving with a suspended or revoked drivers license, or reckless endangerment.
- Have proof of insurance.
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a youth other than his/her own child. Therefore, no fewer than three persons, one of them being an adult, should occupy a vehicle travelling to/from an activity.
- Ensure vehicles are not filled beyond capacity for their use, that seat belts are always secured and that occupants behave.
- Maintain accountability for those present in their vehicle.
- Must understand emergency contact procedures and maintain contact with the person in charge (e.g. cell phone).

Overnight Events

- Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is a clean, safe environment provided for sleeping, showering, bathing, dressing and all other aspects of being away for a period of time. Adults must always respect the privacy of youth and each other.
- When the youth group includes both males and females, and stays overnight both male and female adults must be present.
- Only New Life Assembly Church associated congregational groups, youth and adults participating in the trip are allowed to stay in the same accommodations.
- Sleeping areas and access to bathroom facilities should be segregated between males and females. Every sleeping unit (hotel room, dorm room, cabin, tent, etc.) should have either two adults of the same gender as the youth, or no adults assigned to it. On the occasion when this is not possible there must be at least two youth of the same gender as the adult. Adults are not permitted to share a bed with a youth unless it is their own child. If absolutely necessary, beds may be shared by youth of the same gender. If separate bathroom facilities are not available, times for male and female and youth/adults use should be scheduled and posted prominently.

- When one room is used for sleeping, youth and adults of the opposite gender will sleep an appropriate distance apart as determined by the adult in charge.
- Both youth and adults shall wear appropriate sleeping apparel.
- No youth(s) should be allowed to leave the premises without authorized appropriate adult supervision.
- Curfews must be established and adhered to by all participants.

Exceptional Situations

- Only under the rarest and most unusual circumstances should an adult be alone in a car, room or other accommodation with a youth. This might include a case where a youth is ill or in a bona fide emergency. In this case, the adult should make every effort to enlist the help of another youth or adult to be present and assist. Note however, the welfare of the youth takes precedence and whatever action is necessary and appropriate must be taken.
- If there is a unique need for an adult to talk with a youth in private, the adult should choose a quiet place that is in plain, public view. Example of this may include open areas around the church, (lobby, pastor’s office with the window open for viewing, front steps, etc.)
- Adults need to acknowledge that there is potential for sexual abuse and/or harassment by outside parties and must take responsible and appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth.

Reporting

- Any person, adult or youth, must be ready to safeguard and protect the trust and safety of children and youth. Anyone who has “reason to believe” or evidence that a child/youth is a victim of abuse or neglect has a duty to report. This duty to report is not limited to events or activities at New Life Assembly or under our supervision.
- If anyone is unsure whether an incident or condition should be reported, they should feel free to discuss the circumstances with the Youth Director or the Senior Pastor.

Counselling

Bear in mind, Youth Ministry volunteers are not professional counsellors.

Consequently this occasionally poses a significant boundary issue when working with young people. As they do trust the Youth Ministry Staff, they will begin to confide in them. Problems arise when a young person confides in a volunteer, expecting them to maintain confidentiality. Unfortunately, not all counselling issues can remain confidential.

Youth Ministry volunteers are required to report immediately to the Youth Director if:

- A young person is being abused sexually.
- A young person is threatening to hurt him/herself. (suicide, cutting, etc)
- A young person is threatening to hurt someone else. (homicide, revenge, etc)
- A young person reveals a personal crisis/endangerment. (pregnancy, drug abuse, addictions)

If any of these situations arise, the Youth Director will take the appropriate course of action, including the consulting of authorities and/or parents. The Youth Director is available to give counsel and guidance on any issues or concerns that arise.

Because we are dealing with minors, we will use the utmost discretion as to who to involve in various issues. We desire to build trust with our young people, but are not to the extent of keeping parents excluded from their child's life.

Dress Code

- Modesty is of supreme importance and all youth participants should consider their outfits prior to attending any event.
- Clothes with inappropriate messages or images are not permitted.
- When in doubt, don't wear it. Short shirts or skirts, low tops etc, are best left at home.

Injury & First Aid

- We can administer ONLY band-aids and ice packs.
- If a youth participant is injured while under our supervision, the volunteer in charge will immediately notify the Youth Director. If a serious injury occurs the Senior Pastor will also be notified. All injuries must be reported no matter how insignificant or minor they may seem.

NOTE: Due to personal privacy as well as HIPPA regulations, it is our policy that we do not make inquiry into a person's medical history unless that information is voluntarily administered. Therefore, we will not execute enforcement of mask or vaccine mandates at youth events that

take place on the property of New Life Assembly of God of Griswold. If you prefer that your child wear a mask or be vaccinated, please resolve that expectation of your child personally.

Forms/Releases

- Medical Forms, Insurance Forms, Parental Consent /Permission Slips, Waivers and Releases, etc., will be filed, maintained and secured by the Youth Director.

Example of a Typical Night at Youth Group

- Youth Group starts at 6:30 PM (Youth Volunteers are expected to arrive by 6PM unless stated otherwise.)
- Open with a prayer circle at 6:40 PM
- Opening game (Youth Volunteer plans this game.)
- 7PM Worship
- 7:20 Message
- 7:50 PM Snack & Fellowship
- 8:10 PM Second game (planned by a youth or Youth Director)
- 8:30 PM Dismissal

At times there will be activities that occur that will impact this schedule, it is merely a guideline.

At True Identity we believe in 100% participation. We expect our volunteers and youth to participate in the activities planned, however will not force someone to do something that they feel uncomfortable with.

As a volunteer you may be asked to plan, or facilitate a part of the night, we thank you for all you do in an effort to bless our youth.

This handbook is an ever evolving work that may be added to at any time.